3/20/72

Dear Larry,

I read two two CDN wire-service versions of Lu Palmer's story on the Hampton-Clark citizens' committee after supper. It is one of those things where one is so sorry to have been right. But it was as predictable as pushing buttons. I was writing COUP, which appeared condensed (!!) as FRAME-UP, when that was happening. I referred to that Commission as a flock of capons who tried to crow like tough cocks but would barely summon a respectable cackle. (One who took the lead and is not mentioned in Palmer's stuff on the wire is Conyers. I guess he was leading as long as there were headlines.)

At that time there was no mention of a staff. Great that they had one. If they have the courage to do a bit more than leak some of their work. They could print that thing for relatively little. I'd be glad to show them how to save all typesetting costs, if you know any of them and they have the backbone.

The Times story says it got a copy of the final three-volume draft. Aside from this it says little the wire version (I presume condensed) doesn't say under Palmer's name.

All versions miss the obvious inspiration, the thing that was the dead give-away to me that something more had to happen, first the FBI raid onxthose same headquarters and the trashing and robbing and second hhat nothing of the sort dared be undertaken once the civil-rights act was passed without the at least tacit understand Hoover wanted it.

As a matter of fact, if I correctly remember my reading of the federal grand-jury report, there remains a considerable overstatement in the concession that one shot was fired by the besieged. The most that can be said is that one shor might have been fired from the shotgun loaded with a deer slug. But by whom it was fired and, in fact, if it was really fired, was by no means certain.

It has been a long time since I read that federal report. I marked it then. I am not certain that today I'd recognize the purpose of marking it at each and every point. But if any black writer ever gets the gumption to go into this and other such cases, I'll be glad to help. This will not extend to the mailing of single-copies files, like that g.j. report and some clippings files.

One of the discouragements has been the refusal of any blacks to interest themselves in any other than headline and rhetorical ways. By now it is more than obvious that there was a helluva book in this and it could have been out long ago. And SHOULDx have been. But the situation has almost come to the point where any black thinks he maintains his self-respect and discharges his responsibilities in full if he says, "Whitey did it." That is the end. It answers all.

Even the Howard professor presented so bravely in one of the accounts. I had my experiences with that law school long, long ago. The local NAACP head, a bright young man, was turned on by the first part of COUP. He returned to Howard to take his law degree. He asked what he could do. I said get some members of the faculty to handle some Freedom of Information suits for me on this stuff. He phoned back to say that none would. Later, after refusing to for a long time, going back to before the 1968 election, Bud filed the one on the King material for me.

And having heard nothing of it with Kleindienst so much in the news, I'm dejected by today's FOI committee testimony, on which I was not consulted (although I have every reason to presume my cases were the subject of the testimony). If the documented, slashing attack that should and could have been made was, I can't conceive of not having heard a work of it on the radio, to which I listened for two hours while working outside this p.m. with a.m. testimony. You know part of what is beyond question. In the topical context and with the forum of a committee, do I have to tell you what kind of news could have been generated?

I don't hit 'em all right. I misjudged reaction to the Nixon busing speech, although

I correctly forecast exactly what he would and would not say. When only the capon again pretend to cackle....

The Hampton-Clark case deserved and belongs in a larger context. There were other, similar affairs at close to the same time. Jackson, New Orleans, etc.

As I think I told you, I tried with Palmer and DeZutter and found no interest. No single black reporter has interviewed me on my King work. Only one black show has aired me, and that for 5 minutes. Just today, more than a year after the book appeared and when it is dead, I finally got a reaction from WTOP-TV in Washington, for a next-month's appearance. With a crooked published and a dead book that will be real profitable. I'll be out my travel expenses and can't make anything on it. But how the hell can I say no?

Anyway, don't go to trouble on this. If the stories as they appeared in the paper are more complete than as on the wire, I'd like them for file copies only, on the chance that at some time either and established black writer will feel his balls or a young one will feel his blood and I can then help better.

If I sound discouraged, I am and I'm tired. But it never lasts long.

Best,